

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 25, 2008

BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL: MCGARY ROAD TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

File No. 08-098-01
Project Manager: Melanie Denninger

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and possible Conservancy authorization to disburse up to \$150,000 to the City of Fairfield to assist with the construction of a segment of the San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail along 1.65 miles of McGary Road between Red Top Road and the vicinity of Lynch Road.

LOCATION: The City of Fairfield and unincorporated Solano County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Regional Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Linkages](#)

Exhibit 3: [Aerial Photograph](#)

Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand dollars) to the City of Fairfield (the City) to assist with construction of a segment of the San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail along 1.65 miles of McGary Road between Red Top Road and the vicinity of Lynch Road in Solano County, subject to the following conditions:

1. No Conservancy funds shall be disbursed until the Executive Officer of the Conservancy has approved in writing the following:
 - a. A final work plan, including a budget and schedule, and any contractors proposed to be used;
 - b. A signing plan for the project; and
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- c. Evidence that Solano County agrees to maintain the road and associated trail after construction.
2. The City shall provide pavement striping demarcating the trail from the road along at least 8,000 linear feet of the trail on both sides of the road.
3. The City shall install and maintain a sign which acknowledges the Conservancy's funding contribution to the project and identifies the project as part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail"

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated by the Conservancy on September 20, 2007.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31160-31165), regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of up to \$150,000 to the City of Fairfield to assist with building a segment of the San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail (the Ridge Trail) along approximately 1.65 miles of McGary Road between Red Top Road and the vicinity of Lynch Road. This segment of the Ridge Trail is part of the eastern route of the Ridge Trail alignment adopted by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC) to extend northward into Solano and Napa Counties between eastern Vallejo and the upper watersheds of Suisun and Green Valley Creeks (Exhibit 2). In addition to being a priority for the Ridge Trail, the McGary road trail is an important element of the Solano Transportation Authority's Bicycle Plan, intended to provide a recreational and alternate transportation route between Fairfield and Vallejo.

Trail construction along the Red Top-Lynch section of McGary Road will be undertaken by the City in conjunction with extensive rehabilitation of the road, which has been closed for 10 years due to damage from slope movement. Now that Caltrans has stabilized the slope, the City will further stabilize the roadbed, resurface some sections of the road and replace others, and extend the paving and provide striping and signage for multi-purpose trail use on both sides of the road. The width of the right of way will allow for construction of a trail meeting Class 3 ("bike route," a shared right-of-way that is signed but route is not physically demarcated) and, for at least 8,000 feet, Class 2 ("bike lane," that is striped to provide semi-restricted/exclusive use; also signed) standards, but topography and private property ownership constrain the right of way and preclude construction at this time to Class 1 standards, which require a barrier between motorized and non-motorized uses.

Assisting with this project is a priority for the Conservancy because it helps meet objectives in the Conservancy's enabling legislation and in its strategic plan with respect to improving public

access around the Bay Area and completing the Ridge Trail. (See “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” and “Consistency with the Conservancy’s 2007 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.”)

The proposed grantee, the City of Fairfield, is taking the lead to rehabilitate McGary Road and install the trail. It has developed the plans and engineering, and has assembled the construction funding package. It plans for construction to take place between spring and fall of 2009. The City and the County of Solano are developing an agreement under which the latter will annex and maintain this portion of the road and trail. This proposed grant will be the Conservancy’s first to the City of Fairfield.

Site Description: The project site, McGary Road between Red Top Road and the vicinity of Lynch Road, is situated in a rural portion of southwestern of Solano County, on the outskirts of Vallejo on the west and Fairfield on the east (Exhibits 2 and 3). An almost flat, two-lane frontage road running along the south side of Interstate 80 (I-80), McGary continues several miles west from the project site into the neighborhoods of eastern Vallejo.

In 1998, as the result of massive ground movement under and around I-80 and the resulting damage to the roadbed on the project site, the City of Fairfield closed McGary from Red Top almost to Lynch Road. Caltrans has recently completed measures to stabilize I-80, and the City has concluded that it is prudent to repair, improve, and re-open McGary for motorized and non-motorized use. When McGary is reopened, the automobile use is expected to be mostly for skirting traffic jams on the adjacent stretch of I-80.

While the City of Fairfield currently owns the portion of McGary Road on which the proposed trail project is located, the County of Solano owns and maintains McGary westward from just east of Lynch Road. The short stretch west from Lynch to Hiddenbrooke Parkway/American Canyon Parkway serves as an informal trail segment between the Hiddenbrooke community and the Ridge Trail in Lynch Canyon. In the future, trail improvements will be pursued on this portion of McGary Road and in the vicinity of the Hiddenbrooke/American Canyon freeway overcrossing (Exhibit 2).

Project History: The vision for the Ridge Trail is a 500-mile multi-use (serving hikers, mountain bicyclists and equestrians), continuous trail that rings San Francisco Bay, high on the ridgeline. Under the leadership of the Conservancy and BARTC, and supported by a diverse group of project participants, the Ridge Trail creates an interconnected system of open space and trails that provides recreational opportunities and scenic views to the public. Begun almost 20 years ago, over 300 miles of trail are now dedicated and/or open to the public in all nine Bay Area counties. This authorization will further the Conservancy’s statutory and strategic goal of improving access around San Francisco Bay, and is consistent with previous Conservancy authorizations to negotiate and acquire trail easements, prepare trail construction plans and designs, and construct and open trail segments to the public.

The City of Fairfield has been working for a number of years to design and build the proposed project. City staff and contractors have completed the conceptual design, preliminary engineering, and CEQA review; coordinated with the County; and assembled the construction funding package. The City projects that it will begin construction in spring of 2009 and finish by early 2010.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Final Design, Permitting and Construction

Coastal Conservancy	\$ 150,000
City of Fairfield (estimated in-kind)	50,000
Solano Transportation Authority CMAQ (secured) (Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program)	640,000
Caltrans	
T3-HPP (secured)	500,000
Transportation Development Act (secured)	185,000
Bicycle Transportation Account (pending)	<u>610,915</u>
Total Estimated Cost	\$2,135,000

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the fiscal year 2007-2008 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). This funding source may be used to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state. The proposed project is consistent with this allowed use in that it would result in construction of a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

At an estimated cost of \$100,000, the City of Fairfield funded conceptual design, preliminary engineering, CEQA review, coordination with the County and assemblage of the funding package. The project financing shown above, totaling \$2,135,915, is for the upcoming phase of the project entailing final design, permitting and construction.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Pursuant to Section 31162(a) of the Public Resources Code, the Conservancy may award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will help to improve public access to, within, and around the ridgetops, consistent with the rights of private property owners, and without having a significant adverse impact on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife. Consistent with Section 31162(a), the proposed project will result in construction of a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on previously public property. The proposed project is entirely on currently developed public property in the right of way of an existing road.

Consistent with Section 31163(a), the Conservancy cooperates with nonprofit land trusts and other organizations in identifying and adopting long-term resource and outdoor recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area. Completion of the Ridge Trail is identified in (1) *The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program Regional Needs Briefing Book (Bay Area Open Space Council, July 1999)* and (2) *400 Miles and Beyond: A Strategic Plan for Completing the Bay Area Ridge Trail (BARTC, Draft 2006)*.

Pursuant to Section 31163(c), the Conservancy shall give priority to projects that, to the greatest extent, meet criteria including support by adopted local or regional plans; multiple jurisdictions or service to a regional constituency; ability to be implemented in a timely way; opportunities for benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented; and matching funds from

other sources of funding or assistance. Consistent with criteria in Section 31163(c), the proposed project will: implement the Ridge Trail Plan and the Solano Transportation Authority's Countywide Bicycle Plan; serve regional pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail users; go to construction in spring 2009; ensure that federal funds allocated for the project will not be lost; include cash and in-kind matching funds from multiple sources; and be consistent with the Ridge Trail alignment that has been adopted by the BARTC.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective G** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will result in construction of approximately 1.65 miles of the Ridge Trail.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 20, 2007, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Letters of support have been received from Congressman George Miller, Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, State Senator Patricia Wiggins, Assemblymember Lois Wolk, the Solano Transportation Authority, the Solano County Department of Resource management, and the Public Works Department of the City of Vallejo (Exhibit 4). **Location:** The proposed project is within the nine-county jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
4. **Need:** While the City and a number of other trail and transportation entities are contributing to the project, the Conservancy's proposed contribution of \$150,000 is needed to complete the funding package.
5. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project is necessary for implementing a section of the Ridge Trail, a regionally significant trail system.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The City of Fairfield needs the Conservancy's commitment of funds in order to ensure that the Caltrans' contributions will remain secure.
9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
12. **Readiness:** The City expects to begin construction in spring 2009.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.

15. **Cooperation:** The City has been working with the Solano Transportation Authority and the BARTC to design, fund, and build the proposed project. Under the terms of an agreement that is in preparation, Solano County will take on ownership and maintenance of the project following construction.

In addition, completion of the Ridge Trail is one of the goals identified in the Bay Area Open Space Council's *The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program Regional Needs Briefing Book* (July 1999). Finally, the proposed project is consistent with the BARTC's adopted alignment and the report entitled *400 Miles and Beyond: A Strategic Plan for Completing the Bay Area Ridge Trail* (Draft 2006).

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project modifies an existing street, involving negligible expansion, and is therefore categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15301. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the proposed authorization.